

MINUTES: Centerville Township Windmill Ordinance Committee, November 6, 2006

Present: Molly Hyde, Carolyn Weed, Travis Nelson, Gary Cook, Richard Light, Richard Kobetz, David Wurm

Absent: Joseph Czerniak, Mark Zemanek, Dale Pleva

The purpose of tonight's discussion was to hopefully arrive at a consensus regarding height limits for commercial wind turbines within Centerville township. Mr. Cook brought in some scale drawings of turbines with total height of 420' vs. 188' vs. 125' on level ground as compared to average home and silo heights. Mr. Cook also thinks we should be considering what is visible from the wilderness areas of the national park. Mr. Kobetz stated that in his opinion, height should not be regulated and that setbacks should be determined as a function of height. As there is a 150' limit for private windmills in the zoning ordinance already, the group discussed the rationale for the 150' total height limit. Lighting was a major point and preserving the night sky. Overall scale to the area was another major consideration for 150'. Ms. Weed and Mr. Light both commented on the need to keep in mind the township master plan and the necessity of staying consistent with that plan. Mr. Kobetz questioned why only commercial wind turbines would be regulated by our ordinance if they were limited to 150' when private windmills are limited to that height also? It was again mentioned that our direction from planning was to create regulations for commercial wind. Also the difference in the amount of power to be generated by commercial required totally different types of systems than from private. Mr. Cook and Mrs. Hyde considered the thought of a turbine similar in size to the M-72 turbine within the township, but it was pointed out that a turbine of that height would need to be lighted. Because the M-72 tower is surrounded in close proximity by other taller towers that are already lighted, lights were not necessary for that wind turbine. That is around 188' tower (not including blade height). When a consensus vote was taken, of the seven members present, all but Mr. Kobetz felt that we should limit the tower height to 150'.

The question as to whether we were servicing our townships farms through this wind ordinance came up. Mr. Nelson said that we are responsible for protecting everyone. In the wind farms he observed in Wisconsin and Illinois, a small percentage of farmers in the areas actually lease land for wind turbines. Mr. Cook commented that this is a separate issue. We have considered the positions of the farmers in many issues, visual, taxes, etc. We could clarify in a cover letter, without actually including in the ordinance, all of the things we have considered in the process of creating the ordinance.

Discussion began on setbacks. Mr. Kobetz stated his reasoning for proposing a 4:1 setback to height ratio was based on visual and noise effects of turbines. The theoretical ice throw is enormous but in reality it has proved not to be as bad. Ms. Weed questioned whether or not a 4:1 ratio would be an adequate setback for noise. Arlen Monfils, the township supervisor from Lincoln Twp. WI, has said, based on their experience, that a 2000' setback should be the minimum with no more than 40 decibels. Noise was the biggest problem there. Mr. Nelson also wondered if 4:1 would be adequate for the sound

regulations we had agreed on. Problems can be alleviated with a sufficient setback. Mr. Cook recommended that we put in writing that the French Academy of Medicine has recommended that wind turbines should be based no closer to a residence than 1 mile. That was based on years of experience with wind turbines and sound issues. The committee decided to set a minimum property line setback of 1300'. Due to time issues, the discussion of other setbacks will continue at the next meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 21, 2006.

Respectfully submitted,  
Molly Hyde